Officers are called upon frequently to direct traffic under a wide variety of conditions/scenes. Directing traffic can be very dangerous because motorists are typically exposed to a number of distractions while driving. If not conducted properly, traffic control responsibilities can be fatal to an officer.

1. Situations requiring traffic control

- a) Public safety emergencies including, but not limited to accidents, fires, police emergencies, or any event requiring the rerouting of the normal traffic flow.
- b) Intersections that have predictable traffic patterns requiring an officer control the flow of traffic at certain high volume times.
- c) In support of government agencies doing roadway construction and maintenance.
- d) In any situation where conditions or events congest traffic and public safety concerns require officer control.

2. Considerations for traffic control

Ensure that intervention at a particular location does not worsen traffic conditions at other locations.

3. Equipment

NOTE: Show slide, "Equipment."

- a) Proper safety equipment for daylight traffic control includes a highly reflective traffic vest, whistle, and white or highly visible gloves. Traffic control at night should also include a flashlight with traffic wand attached.
- b) Officers should be prepared for all weather conditions appropriate for the season.

4. Position in roadway

a) The position selected to direct traffic depends upon the type of roadway and volume of traffic. The officer should consider the position that offers the greatest visibility to

both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The officer must assess if total control of the intersection is possible and position him/herself in the area that offers the greatest control and visibility. In most instances, the center of the intersection is the best location. It should be noted that this is also the most dangerous position and officers should be extremely alert and cautious while performing his duties.

- b) Center of the intersection position
 - (1) Greatest visibility
 - (2) Most hazardous
 - (3) Provides greatest control
- c) The corner position
 - (1) Used primarily where there is heavy pedestrian traffic.
 - (2) Affords greater officer safety and better pedestrian control.
- d) Six lane or divided roadway intersections should be controlled with two or more officers working in unison.
- 5. Directing traffic

NOTE: Show slide, "Directing Traffic."

Computerized directional signals have proven their effectiveness in maintaining smooth traffic flow, and as a result drivers are no longer accustomed to officers directing traffic. This may increase stress for motorist as officers attempt to control intersections using motions and gestures. The use of uniform, clearly defined and understandable signals will maximize the officer's ability to control traffic.

a) When entering the intersection officers should position themselves with their sides of their body parallel to the moving lanes of traffic. The back and front of the body should be facing stopped traffic.

- b) To stop traffic Two motions are required. Extend the arm straight out and point at the driver who is to stop. Make eye contact with the driver and when you have his attention raise your hand (not arm) so that your palm is toward the driver. Hold this position until the driver stops. After the driver has stopped repeat the same movement with the other lane of traffic with the other arm. Keep both arms in the stop position until all movement has stopped in both directions. With traffic stopped turn your sides parallel to the traffic you will be starting.
- c) To start traffic Two motions are required. First, point with the arm and finger directly to the driver you want to start. When eye contact is made, turn palm up and raise the hand to a position slightly past the center of your face. Bend the arm only at the elbow. If the driver does not move immediately repeat the signal. After traffic has begun to move signal the other lane in the same manner using the other arm. Continue to use this signal to instruct drivers to proceed.
- d) Right turn Signals for a right hand turn depend on the direction the vehicle is approaching from. If the vehicle approaches from the right, point to the driver with an extended right arm. As the driver makes eye contact swing your arm in the direction of the turn. If the driver approaches from the left, use the left arm. Swing the arm in the direction the driver wants to go.
- e) <u>Left turn</u> When directing a driver wishing to make a left turn, you may need to direct the vehicle to stop.

 Next, hold the opposing flow of traffic. If the turning vehicle is approaching from the left, the opposing traffic should be stopped with the right hand. With traffic stopped, signal the turning driver by extending the left arm and pointing. Signal the driver by indicating a path in front of you and not around you. If the driver attempts to swing around you step backward and repeat the signal directing the vehicle in front of you.

If the vehicle approaches from the right, turn to opposing traffic and halt with right hand again using the left arm to indicate a turning path in front of you like above.

- f) <u>Use of the whistle</u> the whistle is an extremely useful tool when directing traffic and should be available and used to get the attention of drivers and pedestrians any time the officer is directing traffic. The whistle is used as follows:
 - (1) One long blast with a STOP signal.
 - (2) <u>Two short blasts</u> with the GO signal.
 - (3) <u>Several short blasts</u> to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.
- g) <u>The voice</u> is rarely used in directing traffic. Oral commands are usually ineffective and confusing to drivers. Refrain from issuing directions by voice.

Occasionally a driver or pedestrian will not understand arm signals. When this happens, move reasonably close to the person and politely and briefly explain the command. In all instances, address such people properly as sir, madam, or miss/ms. Do not shout or exhibit a loss of temper.

h) The illuminated baton

- (1) The baton is useful in directing traffic at night or during bad weather when visibility is low.
- (2) To **STOP** a vehicle using a baton, face the moving line of traffic, standing slightly aside from its direct path. With the baton in the right hand, hold it in front of you with the illuminated wand horizontal and pointed left. Hold the light steady to stop traffic.
- (3) The **GO** signal is given in the normal manner. Turn the body parallel to the line of traffic to be moved and give the normal GO arm movement.
- (4) To permit a left turn movement, after stopping opposing traffic, point the lighted end of the baton to the car which is to make the turn. Next,

swing the baton in an arc toward the direction of the left turn movement. Repeat the signal as required to move the vehicle in front of the officer.

- i) The **flashlight** can be used to direct traffic in an emergency, but it is a poor substitute for a baton. To stop traffic, slowly swing the flashlight at arms length across the path of the approaching car. The beam of the flashlight strikes the pavement as an elongated spot of moving light which should be seen by the motorist. Do not stand directly in front of the approaching car. After the motorists has stopped, give arm signals in the usual manner. Headlights from the vehicle will illuminate the signals.
- j) Two officer signaling
 - (1) There are times when two or more officers are needed to effectively control traffic at large or busy intersections.
 - (2) One of the officers must originate all signals and gestures. One officer is the leader and makes the control decisions, while the other officer assists by coordinating with and extending signals.
- k) Traffic control at accident scenes
 - (1) The primary purpose for traffic control at accident scenes is to provide access and protection to traffic investigators and emergency services carrying out their respective tasks. The secondary purpose is to facilitate traffic flow even if restricted. Officers should be particularly alert to hazards such as leakage of gas and oil. Notify fire department personnel if these conditions exist.
 - (2) Traffic should be detoured from the accident scene. In residential or business areas, detour traffic one or more blocks in each direction as may be necessary. Do not allow any traffic to enter intersection without providing them with a way out.

- (3) If the accident occurs on a main highway or freeway, either detour traffic onto access roads or funnel traffic into single lanes past the accident scene.
- (4) North Carolina G.S. 20-114.1(b) provides that uniformed regular and volunteer firemen and rescue squad personnel may direct traffic and enforce traffic laws and ordinances at the scene of or in connection with their duties as firemen or rescue members.
- 1) Traffic control at fire scenes
 - (1) When directing traffic at fire scenes, be concerned with keeping traffic from entering the fire area and allowing vehicles in the fire area an opportunity to exit. Keep all vehicular and pedestrian traffic beyond the established fire line.
 - (2) Coordinate enforcement and traffic direction and activities with the fire department officials.
- m) Use of traffic flares, cones, and other warning signs
 - (1) The following table is a MINIMUM distance at which a line of flares, cones, and other warning signs should be started away from the accident scene. Note the distance at which oncoming traffic receives its first warning is dependent on the speed limit of the roadway.

55 mph zone 375 feet warning then every 40 feet to scene.

45 mph zone 300 feet warning then every 40 feet to scene.

35 mph zone 200 feet warning then every 30 feet to scene.

25 mph zone 100 feet warning then every 25 feet to scene.

In any speed zone where flares are used to funnel traffic to another lane use flares every 20 feet. This provides a clear path for the motorist to follow.

- (2) Handle flares carefully. The flare burns at 1500 degrees and can damage uniforms and burn flesh severely. Plastic lane dividers will melt if flares are placed on or near them.
- (3) Flammable liquid concern

Flares should not be used when officers suspect the presence of spilled flammable or hazardous materials.

NOTE: Show NCJA video, Techniques of Traffic Law Enforcement - "Traffic Direction." (7 minutes)

NOTE: Instructors should demonstrate how to ignite and set up flares outside the classroom.

L. Assessing Roadway Safety

In an effort to reduce traffic collisions and as a part of law enforcement's traffic enforcement responsibilities, it is necessary to assess roadway safety continually. The process of compiling information for this purpose begins with collecting simple data about the roadway. The following summarizes a general process for assessing roadway safety:

- 1. Identify, describe, and classify the roadway.
- 2. Observe the condition of the roadway and determine if a hazard exists.
- 3. Interpret the observations and determine a course of action that will eliminate the hazard.
- M. Conducting Preliminary and Follow-up Investigations

NOTE: Show slide, "Investigations."